

# Katrina Response: Daily Message Points September 4, 2005

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

### **Missing Kids Hotline reconnects seven children with their families Saturday night**

- Four families at a shelter in San Antonio, TX, were reconnected with their children in Baton Rouge, LA.
- DSS is arranging air transportation to reunite them.
- This is a direct result of the Missing Kids hotline.

### **Update of Displaced Citizens in Shelters**

- Nearly 49,000 displaced citizens in 75 Louisiana shelters.
- Another 1,000 citizens are located in six special needs shelters.
- There are another 47,540 displaced citizens in 10 shelters in Texas, Arkansas and Alabama.

### **DSS Working with FEMA, Red Cross & LANO to Re-unite Families**

- Evacuees are manually registered in shelters when they enter and leave.
- This information is being compiled into a master database; will be made available on a website and, possibly, by a toll-free number.
- Estimated timeline: several days.

### **Food Stamps Applications Received**

- About 87,000 emergency food stamp benefits applications have been received since Friday a.m.
- Family Assistance offices remain open 24 hours

DSS is receiving reports of Electronic Benefit Transfer cards not being utilized in some areas, and the Office of Family Support is currently working with the federal government in resolving this situation. An announcement should be made later today.

## DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

### **DOL receives a \$62 million federal grant**

- To provide about 10,000 temporary jobs for dislocated workers to help in the recovery and clean-up efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

- The National Emergency Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor will be used in part for demolition, renovation and reconstruction of destroyed public structures, facilities and lands in coordination with other agencies providing services to affected communities.

### **DOL Issuing Unemployment Insurance Checks**

- DOL is providing unemployment insurance to those persons who were receiving them prior to Hurricane Katrina.
- If an individual lives in a zip code area of 70000-70199 or 70300-70499, and was expecting a UI benefits last week, these checks are available.
  - o Checks can be picked up between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.
  - o Today, Sunday, through the rest of the week.
  - o DOL Main Office, located at 1001 North 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in Baton Rouge.
  - o For additional information or directions to this location, please contact 1-866-783-5567.

### **DOL Working in Shelters**

- DOL went to dozens of shelters around the state Saturday to take unemployment insurance and disaster assistance claims from evacuees.
- Between 8,000 and 12,000 applications were taken.
- DOL will continue taking claims at the shelters Sunday and next week.

## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & DEVELOPMENT**

### **17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal**

- Hope to have breach closed by the end of the day.
- A dam is being built across the breach. The dam is being built at 10 feet an hour with rock and dirt.
- Temporary pumps are being positioned for start up.
- Existing pump stations continue to be worked on to be ready for start up.
- DOTD hopes to have some pumping started before noon tomorrow.

### **London Canal**

- Yesterday, the New Orleans Levee District sealed off/secured the canal.
- The Army Corps of Engineers is currently mobilizing inflatable barge equipment in an attempt to reach the two breaches and begin to secure them. The barges should arrive at the breach site within 48 hours.

### **Army Corps of Engineers**

-The Corps has a contract with Boh Brothers Construction to open bridges, both movable and railroad, and clear the Industrial canal of sunken barges.

### **Ferries**

- Working to put ferry landings in service on the East and West Bank to transport vehicles back and forth from the Chalmette to the Algiers Point. These vehicles are used for rescues, communication purposes and recovery efforts.
- Ferries transporting evacuees to Algiers Point are on hold because there are no more evacuees at the staging points. Boats are engaging in search and rescue and will bring people to the ferries to be transported when they are found.

### **Traffic signals**

- Signal crews have completed work in Jefferson Parish, St. Tammany Parish and St. Charles parish.
- Signal work will be done in Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parish once the water recedes.

## **DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES**

### **L.D.W.F. Search & Rescue Missions Continue**

- As of Saturday evening, LDWF has rescued an estimated 18,000 people.
- Approximately 400 LDWF employees have been devoted to the effort.
- Enforcement staff and other rescue groups have been working 16-hour shifts using 500 boats since August 29.
- The department is working with personnel representing state wildlife agencies, state law enforcement agencies, firefighting teams, and search and rescue specialists from:  
Tennessee, Texas, Kentucky, South Carolina, Colorado, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and California.
- As the evacuation continues, rescue groups from 12 additional states will be assisting with rescues and refreshing active personnel.

## **DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

**DEQ & EPR fly over air-sampling shows no significant chemical findings**

- DEQ and the Environmental Protection Agency flew through a plume of a fire on Charters St. in New Orleans; revealed no significant chemical findings.
- Photos reveal fire **was not a chemical plant**, but a warehouse containing Mardi Gras floats.

### **Oil Spill Cleanups**

- DEQ coordinating with the Regional Response Team, Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinators Office and the Coast Guard on oil spill issues.
- There are several oil spills where cleanup is already taking place.
- Some other locations, still inaccessible.

### **Collaborative Efforts**

- The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has provided a **19-member “strike team”** to assist our emergency response activities
- **DEQ is working with the Corps of Engineers on debris and solid waste cleanup and disposal issues**
  - o Debris & solid waste cleanup is a critical issue
  - o DEQ is trying to find landfills and other means for disposal
- DEQ is working with EPA to contact various railroad companies for information on contents and status of railcars in the impacted area.

## **OFFICE OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

### **OFC Assisting Displaced Citizens Reach their Financial Institutions**

- OFC has established a toll-free number to assist displaced citizens in acquiring information about their financial institutions.
- For information about financial institutions, **call 1-866-783-5530** or 225-925-4660 or go online to [www.ofi.louisiana.gov](http://www.ofi.louisiana.gov).

## **DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

### **DOC Priorities**

- **Identifying and classifying inmates from Orleans and Jefferson Parish Prisons**
  - o Ex. Pretrial vs. those convicted

- Working with local and federal enforcement agencies to relocate inmates and **free up space** in state institutions.

- Unloading trucks and taking inventory of supplies sent to DOC from other state correctional systems throughout the country for use in local shelters first and then state institutions second (clothing, non-perishable food items, water, etc.).

## LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LED Helping Businesses Relocate, Assisting Consulates Locate Displaced Citizens.

- To provide assistance in temporarily relocating affected businesses, LED as set up the following email for all inquiries: [katrinabizhelp@la.gov](mailto:katrinabizhelp@la.gov) .

- LED has provided contact information to shelters for 70 consulates/countries that are searching for displaced citizens. Some staff members have opened up personal residences to house consulates as well.